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## Reflections on defections, comrades

**T**he phone connection was awful as I listened to this column's top secret U.S. intelligence source.

As any East Coast reporter can tell you, these sources are usually a dime a dozen. The way they teach you in journalism school, you just find somebody in the United States you think is intelligent and quote him without using his name. Nonetheless, this guy had hot stuff.

"What?" I shouted into the phone, "Secretary Shultz has defected?"

Mentally, I was already spending

### CAPITAL SKETCH

By S.J. Masty

the Pulitzer Prize money — "Secretary of state defects to Soviets" — it could be bigger than Watergate.

"No, you boob," the response crackled over the line, "he's defective." This was another matter altogether. It isn't news because everyone knows it.

"His State Department staff thinks a Russian sailor jumping overboard is trying to reach a 7-Eleven. The whole joint is mentally defective," the source continued.

"When the guy jumps overboard again, they think he just wants another grape Slurpee or a pair of Daniel Ortega sunglasses."

"What about the Ukrainian translator?" I asked. "She clearly said the poor fellow wanted to stay."

"That's the Immigration Service," he explained. "First, they thought he was a Mexican because his clothes were wet. There's nothing they like less than a Mexican. When they figured out who he was, they realized how many forms they would have to fill out. That stuff can take four, maybe five hours. Everything's done in triplicate, you know."

"But the poor man's life is at stake," I complained.

"Look, chump," he said, "the U.S. government pimps for Gulf Oil while their profits help Angolan communists kill the families of UNITA freedom fighters. What's one guy sent to the gulag? Compared to a civil servant spending five grueling hours filling out forms? Be reasonable."

"But won't this be utterly humiliating to President Reagan? Remember, years ago, when the Coast Guard returned that Lithuanian who jumped ship?"

"Embarrassing for whom?" he asked. "Who'll tell the president?"

"For the last three weeks, he's been locked in the White House bathroom until he memorizes key summit details. You know, stuff like Russian dances, great paintings in the Hermitage, Russia's role as an ally in the Great Patriotic War — stuff that will make him popular with Gorbys."

"If the president was really clued in to what's going on, do you

think Shultz would have stayed this long?"

"Good point," I conceded. "But what about Vitaly Yurchenko, the KGB defector who wants to go back? Network news says he was jilted by some Canadian broad and wants to go home now."

"Poppycock," said the source. "As bad as Canadian women are, they're not a patch on Russian babes. Canadian women shave. No, the guy's going back for his own well-being."

"You're kidding," I exclaimed. "Either he's a KGB plant, and he'll get a dacha with a leaky roof and a tin Order of Stalin, or he really defected and they'll kill him."

"Think, dummy," he said. "He was legit, but he saw how the feds betrayed a low-level defector. He figured once he told all, he'd be sent back, too. Then he'd be killed, but in the meantime, he'd be subjected to torture over here."

"You mean our guys tortured him?" I asked.

"How else could you describe talking to CIA and State Department employees? If that isn't torture, what is?" he continued. "How many hours can a normal person talk about detente, compassion, arms control, bilateral understanding, and how the head creep likes jazz and scotch?"

"No, he decided it would be easier to face the Soviet firing squad now, rather than have to drink tea with Shultz' defectives, and then face the Red firing squad."

"It all makes sense now," I said.